

Local Community Involvement - The Swedish Example – 14639

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ABSTRACT

Since 1994 the municipalities of Östhammar and Oskarhamn have been involved in the siting process in Sweden concerning spent nuclear fuel. The involvement is enacted in the current Environment Act, and has given the municipality the right of veto. The role of the local level has its base in the self-governance history and structure of Sweden and also the shared experience of being strong together in the contact with the implementer and authorities.

Over the years three leading themes has evolved that form the basis for our participation – voluntarism to participate in the process, complete openness and transparency of plans and results and full participation to be able to influence the outcome.

The municipalities are an active part in the process and has put forward demands towards the Swedish Waste Management company (SKB) to make socioeconomic studies to be able to fully understand the impact of an industrial project as big and as controversial as this.

The municipalities regard themselves as an asset in their role to review the application from the industry. The municipalities have different “in house” set-ups of local review organisations, financed by the Swedish nuclear waste fund. The main objective is to make sure that the local council -unique for its right of veto- shall be as prepared as possible to make decisions with a high degree of understanding, knowledge and confidence in such a complex and technical issue.

The most important concern for the municipalities has been long term safety. As the process progresses, the municipalities work with dialogue with the inhabitants, stretching of the implementer and statements to the authorities are frequently used tools for contributing to achieve this. We also believe that it is of great importance to mutually share our experience and understanding with other countries and local communities that deals with the same issues but in a different context.

The mayor of Östhammar will give a brief introduction to the governance system of Sweden and the right of veto, continue with the importance of clearly defined roles, mention the work that has been done in dialogue with inhabitants and politicians, and finally describe the Swedish agreement on added values-program from a political point of view.